



## Town of Concord

### Drop & Swap: Reuse Event Case Study

MassDEP Municipal Waste Reduction Toolkit



Twice a year the Town of Concord holds a reuse and recycling Drop-off Day and Swap-Off to provide residents with an opportunity to recycle a wide variety of items not collected for recycling at the curb. The event is cosponsored by the public works department and REUSIT, Concord's recycling committee. Over 100 residents volunteer at the event which is attended by approximately 800 households (15% of the town). In addition to collecting materials for reuse and recycling the event also collects oversized waste for disposal as trash.

#### History of the Event

The origins of Concord's Drop-off Day and SwapOff date back to the days of the recycling center and swapshed at the landfill. When the landfill closed in 1993 REUSIT mourned the loss of the swapshed and recycling area and decided to hold twice a year (more or less) SwapOff and Styrofoam collection. In 1998 the event was expanded to include scrap metal and oversized waste, and in 1999 the program took off with the collection of electronics. The event has grown steadily to collect over twenty different reusable or recyclable items, and each year looks for more materials that can be pulled out of the waste stream.

#### Event design

The event is divided into two main areas, the "SwapOff" take-it-or-leave-it area and the "drop-off" area for recyclable and reusable items as well as oversized waste. The SwapOff portion of the event is free, but some of the items in the Drop-off area are fee based, such as electronics, scrap metal, Styrofoam, furniture and mattress recycling, and oversized waste disposal. The Drop-off Day and SwapOff is designed to be a "break even" event for the Town with costs and revenues running each about \$12,000 per event.

#### Items collected at the SwapOff Event

Residents are invited to bring to the SwapOff "things you no longer want or need, take away things you can use. Everything is free." Residents drop off and take home reusable items of every imaginable size, shape, and form, from old trunks, lawnmowers, and armchairs, to clocks, dishes, and five-gallon pails.

#### Selected Items collected at the Drop-off Event

Items with (\$) are collected for a fee, others are accepted at no charge.

- Scrap Metal (\$)
- Appliances and propane tanks (\$)
- Reusable building materials
- Electronics (\$)
- Upholstered furniture & mattresses (\$)
- Styrofoam and flower pots (\$)
- CD's and videos
- Fluorescent bulbs & batteries
- Rags
- Crayons
- Athletic shoes
- Bicycles

#### Background – Brief Description of Concord's SW/Recycling System

Concord is a pay-as-you-throw curbside collection community that does not provide tax revenue for trash collection or disposal, so residents are accustomed to paying the full cost to dispose of items they no longer want or need. The success of the Concord event is due in part to the confluence of a number of different circumstances, such as PAYT curbside collection, no town-sponsored bulk pickup, no permanent drop-off recycling center, and an active and environmentally aware citizenry. The Drop-off Day and SwapOff is the one municipally-provided service that allows residents to reuse, recycle, or dispose of consumer goods or bulky waste not collected at the curb.

### How the Event is Organized

The event is a joint program sponsored by Concord Public Works and REUSIT (a local non-profit recycling organization) and utilizes the following staff and volunteers:

**Municipal Recycling Coordinator:** Responsible for central coordination of the event each year including contacting vendors, preparing materials, overseeing event, paying vendors, etc.

**Drop-off area volunteer coordinator (1):** Schedules volunteers for two-hour shifts.

Helps with mailings.

**SwapOff area volunteer coordinator (1):** Coordinates SwapOff area volunteers and oversees SwapOff area event.

**Volunteer team leaders (8):** In charge of volunteers in designated areas.

**Volunteers (100):** Volunteers work two or three-hour shifts in designated areas.

**Police officer (1):** Polices the SwapOff area and assists with parking.

**DPW Staff (3):** DPW staff drive the front end loaders that are used to load large and heavy items into the oversized waste and scrap metal rollofs, and packs down the rollofs to maximize capacity. In addition the DPW assists in setting up the area the day before and the morning of the event, as well as cleaning up after the event is over.

To learn more:

Other communities that are interested in trying to develop a similar program are welcome to attend our next event. If you would like more information contact Ann Dorfman, Recycling and Waste Management Program Administrator, at 978-318-3241 or [adorfman@concordnet.org](mailto:adorfman@concordnet.org).

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Municipal Waste Reduction Program, wishes to thank the Concord Department of Public Works (DPW) for working with us to document the "how to" of their Swap-Off Day to help other municipalities set up similar events.